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**Drug Interdiction: Can We Stop the New  
Pancho Villa?**

**A Monograph  
by  
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Infantry**



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This monograph examines the role which the United States Army can play in counter-drug operations. First, the current drug threat to the United States is analyzed for vulnerability to American action. Areas where drugs can be attacked are at the source, in transit, and at their destination. Each area is analyzed in terms of Army capabilities, domestic reaction, international reaction, and drug smuggler reactions. Interdiction at the borders of the United States is determined to be the most viable method for attacking drugs using the Army. Two historical examples are analyzed to determine the capability for using the Army at the borders. The examples are American Army operations designed to stop cross-border incursions during the time of the Mexican Revolution and East German frontier sealing operations. The monograph concludes that the United States Army, if augmented by modern technology, could successfully conduct drug interdiction at the southwest border today.			
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## ABSTRACT

### DRUG INTERDICTION: CAN WE STOP THE NEW PANCHO VILLA?

This monograph examines the role which the United States Army can play in counter-drug operations.

First, the current drug threat to the United States is analyzed for vulnerability to American military action. Areas where drugs can be attacked are at the source, in transit, and at their destination in the United States. Any sizeable U.S. military operations within source countries faces tremendous complications in obtaining domestic support and host nation permission and cooperation. Many of the same problems exist in interdicting drugs in transit over international waters or through other countries. Within the United States itself, both legal restraints and American tradition prohibit the use of military forces for law enforcement. The most viable use of the American military is at the borders of the United States, where legal restraints are not so clear and domestic opposition is less likely.

The current preferred drug smuggling route is through Mexico and over the southwest border. Two historical examples are analyzed to determine whether or not using the Army to seal the southwest border against illegal drug smuggling is a viable role. American Army operations designed to stop cross border incursions during the time of the Mexican Revolution from 1910-1920 are examined along with East German frontier sealing operations. Both military forces were successful in essentially stopping illegal border crossings. Both used what Clausewitz characterizes as a cordon defense, which is essentially a line of small outposts stretched immediately along a border.

The monograph concludes that the United States Army, if augmented by modern technology, could successfully conduct drug interdiction at the southwest border today by using the same type of cordon defense. The investment for success is estimated to be approximately 65,000 troops.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The United States is being attacked today by a real and dangerous enemy. Because that enemy is not recognizable in the traditional sense, in that it does not possess tanks or a uniformed army or even come from a specific country, many have not yet recognized that we are at war. The war is against drugs and those who would bring them into the United States. Some theorists maintain that this is a precursor of "future" war in which assaults on a nation's culture or traditional way of life will be frequent and may be more dangerous than armed conflict between nations. <sup>1</sup>

Victory in this war is arguably more critical than in any of our more traditional military involvements since World War II. The problems that stem from drug use are a litany of our nation's most serious ills. Crime and violence are inextricably linked to drug use. Fifty percent of all hospital emergency room patients in the nation are treated for drug use or drug related violence or injuries. For example, in a recent study, 84% of all felony criminals who were apprehended in Chicago tested positive for illegal drugs. The number was 82% for San Diego. <sup>2</sup> Drug addicts also turn to other crimes to finance their habits. The recent increase in prostitution and venereal disease is primarily a result of female addicts selling sex to finance their addiction. The role model of successful drug entrepreneurs entices children out of school and into the drug selling infrastructure, thus undermining the traditional American ethics of education and labor for advancement in favor of illegal activity. <sup>3</sup>

Were all this violence and criminality caused by, for instance, agents of another country, this nation would demand that the military take action. Due to the non-traditional nature of this enemy, however, military involvement has been slow in coming. This slowness has been exacerbated by the recognition that the

center of gravity of the enemy is American demand."

The three major types of illegal drugs that are imported into the United States are marijuana, cocaine, and heroin. In 1989, 28 million Americans used some form of these illicit drugs. Twelve million Americans are regular marijuana users. Three million Americans are regular cocaine users and 500,000 Americans are addicted to heroin.<sup>5</sup> The demand which these Americans generate is the fuel which runs the drug machine. However, just as in an insurgency in which the center of gravity is dissatisfaction with the government, but in which elements from other countries are supplying the insurgents, there is significant utility in isolating this country from those outside influences which are supplying the drugs. A further benefit is that reduced supply in the marketplace drives up the prices and increases the difficulty of obtaining drugs and thereby mitigates demand.

It is in the role of reducing the flow of drugs into the United States that the military may be able to play a significant and even central role. Indeed, in the United States' Drug Strategy, the Department of Defense has now been identified as the lead federal agency in detection and monitoring in support of aerial and maritime interdiction activities to stem the movement of illegal drugs into this country.<sup>6</sup> Within that context, this paper will examine the question of "What should the United States Army's role be in a counter-drug campaign?"

To answer that question, the nature of the threat must be understood. Where drugs come from, how they get to the United States, and potential vulnerabilities will be identified. Drugs may be attacked at their source, enroute to America, and within the United States itself. Each of these points will be examined to determine where the military can be used most effectively. However, as the U.S. Army represents the land power portion of the Department of

Defense, the focus will be on land borders of the United States.

Threats, other than drugs, that could cause the United States to conduct military operations on the land borders will not be examined in detail. Those threats include massive waves of illegal immigration caused by social unrest, warfare, or economic collapse in Mexico or Central America as well as the threat of terrorism, banditry, and quasi-guerrilla warfare. Any of these could accompany either the collapse of internal Mexican political authority, the installation of a Mexican government overtly hostile to the United States, or another violent revolution in Mexico. An assumption is made that these threats are less likely, particularly when juxtaposed against the clear and present danger of drugs.

Next, historical sources will be examined for evidence that the United States Army can perform the mission of drug interdiction on the border. Two examples will be used. First, this paper will examine how the American Army accomplished the mission of sealing off the southwest border of the United States during the unrest which accompanied the period of the 1910-1920 Mexican Revolution. Next, for a more contemporary example, evidence will be presented regarding East German methods and relative success in preventing unauthorized crossings of the Inter-German border.

The historical examples will then be compared with current United States Army war fighting doctrine. That doctrine is known as AirLand Battle. It is based on forces operating under the tenets of initiative, agility, depth, and synchronization.<sup>7</sup> Based on the historical examples, the usefulness of these tenets for border drug interdiction operations will be examined. Finally, the implications for contemporary military planners in terms of the Army role for drug interdiction along the southwest border will be explored.



## II. THE DRUG THREAT

The military role in the war against drugs has been rapidly evolving over recent years. Initially, the Pentagon felt that anti-drug operations diverted critical resources away from the real need, which was to maintain an effective force to deter or counter the Soviet Union. With the advent of *glasnost* and the subsequent disintegration of the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe, concern over Russian aggressiveness has lessened. Accordingly, many in the military and in the United States government now regard the use of the resulting excess military forces in the drug war as viable and even desirable.<sup>20</sup>

To understand how military, and specifically Army, forces can be used in a counter-drug role, it is first necessary to examine the drug threat. Combatting illegal drugs is normally described as consisting of two general strategies. The first is cutting supply and the second is reducing demand. The United States National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS) recognizes both of those methods as legitimate, but is very careful to also recognize that either one by itself will not be sufficient. The NDCS therefore provides for a balanced program which, while emphasizing the reduction of demand, simultaneously attacks both the supply and demand sides of the problem.<sup>21</sup>

Reducing demand also falls into two general strategies. The first is to stop those individuals who are already using drugs from continuing their self-destructive behavior and the second is to prevent those persons who are currently drug-free from starting to use drugs.

Stopping individual drug-users can be done in several ways. First, for addicts, treatment must be available to help them overcome their addiction. The NDCS recommendation for the budget would allocate more money to treatment than to any other category except for overall law enforcement.<sup>22</sup> Other individuals are labeled as "casual" or "recreational" users. They are regular or occasional

users, but are not technically addicted to the drug. Compared to addiction, recreational drug use is much more common. This is key in that the contagion of drug use is spread by non-addicts. Strung-out junkies do not make a good advertisement for other individuals to use drugs. Any reductions in the non-addicted user population will therefore have the long term benefit of reducing recruitment of other individuals to drug use. Additionally, since every addict starts out as a casual user, reducing casual use will reduce the pool of individuals who later become addicts.<sup>11</sup>

The important point to note is that non-addict drug use is much easier to change than that of addicts. Simply raising the price of drugs or restricting their availability as well as intensifying legal and social sanctions for those who use drugs all have been shown to have a relatively quick effect on reducing drug demand among non-addicts.<sup>12</sup> The ramification is that actions which the Army can take to reduce supply and thereby affect price and availability will also act to reduce demand among casual users.

Preventing the start of drug use is a function of education, social attitudes, and the deterrent effect of the criminal justice system. Education is designed to teach the adverse health and psychological aspects of drug use. Changing social attitudes relates to deglamorizing the use of drugs and attaching a stigma to such use. Media campaigns including prominent political, sports, and entertainment figures are examples of ways to influence the change of social attitudes. The criminal justice system can influence persons not to begin drug use if they perceive law enforcement to be effective and punishment to be probable.<sup>13</sup> The Army and the other military services participate in anti-drug public information and awareness programs for schools and youth groups. However, it is difficult to ascertain what impact, if any, the Army's efforts in this area are producing.<sup>14</sup>

On the demand side of the house, the United States military can make little direct impact. The total Department of Defense civilian and military establishment of three million persons is only slightly over one percent of the nation's population. Drug use among Department of Defense personnel has already declined by 80% since 1980.<sup>19</sup> Internal measures to further reduce demand within the Department of Defense would therefore have only slight, if any, impact. As a component of the Department of Defense, the same holds true for the Army.

The other side of the coin is reduction of drug supply. It is a multifaceted operation that includes efforts to attack the illicit drug distribution network within the United States, measures to eradicate drugs at their production source, and endeavors to interdict them enroute from production to retail distribution.

Supply reduction can affect drug use in three ways:<sup>20</sup>

1. It physically limits the amount of drugs in the country so that there is not enough for consumption.
2. Costs are raised for drug producers, smugglers, and distributors, thus raising costs at the retail level for users and thereby reducing demand.
3. Drug availability becomes less predictable or certain, thus deterring drug users from habitual or frequent use.

Attacking the supply of drugs within the borders of the United States is primarily a function of the criminal justice system. Effective criminal justice is designed to both reduce the supply of drugs actually available on the streets as well as to disrupt the organizations and trafficking operations which provide and sell the drugs. The elements of criminal justice include the law enforcement personnel and agencies which actually conduct the investigations and make the arrests, the government attorneys who prosecute the cases, the courts that try the cases, and the prisons which hold the convicted offenders. These elements

must be looked at as a system in which a shortfall in capacity within any individual element restricts the capability of the whole. An effective criminal justice system deters criminals from more brazen activity and deters others from ever becoming involved in illegal drugs.<sup>14</sup>

A major shortfall within the criminal justice system of the United States has been lack of cooperation among the various law enforcement agencies working to attack drugs and their distributors within the United States. Some of this lack of cooperation has been attributed to interagency rivalry, but most appears to be simply a function of inadequate systems and processes for coordinating operations and for sharing information and intelligence. Because of its experience and technical capability for communicating and coordinating between disparate organizations, the Department of Defense has been designated to act as the lead agency in providing better communications and intelligence cooperation between the various law enforcement agencies.<sup>15</sup>

Beyond this limited role, using the military to directly attack the supply of drugs within the United States runs into a whole host of problems. American values and attitudes about the military are opposed to the use of the military for law enforcement inside the United States. Over the years, this has given rise to statutes prohibiting the use of military forces for arrests, searches, and seizures (The Posse Comitatus Act) and restricting the gathering of domestic intelligence by military forces. However, since Posse Comitatus does not apply to National Guard forces under state control, states have always had, and many times utilized, the National Guard to augment, substitute for, or back-up law enforcement elements needing assistance. Accordingly, there are both legal and traditional restraints against the use of the regular military for domestic law enforcement and there exists a viable alternative in the National Guard when local law enforcement resources are stretched beyond their capacity.<sup>16</sup>

Eradication of illegal drugs at the source is physically easiest and perhaps the most cost effective way of reducing the supply. However, because all the major suppliers of drugs are located in foreign countries, the complications and difficulties of actually accomplishing eradication programs are myriad. In some cases, as exemplified by the Medellin Cartel in Colombia, the vast sums of money which the drug producers have acquired has brought a measure of prosperity to the local area and has thereby earned loyalty from elements of the populace in excess of that shown the legitimate government. In other cases, insurgent guerrillas or terrorists have formed a symbiotic relationship with the drug lords in which protection is offered in return for money and arms. The *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path) movement in Peru provides an example as well as some of the *Mujahadeen* resistance groups in Afghanistan.

Additionally, attacking the supply of drugs at the source is constrained by the necessity to give due regard to the sovereignty of the countries involved. Some countries, such as Laos and Cuba, do not maintain good relationships with the United States and do not feel overly compelled to cooperate in what is perceived as a problem with American demand. This same attitude is present to some degree throughout Latin America. For governments in that area, genuine distrust of the United States is coupled with the political consideration not to appear as a "puppet" of United States policy. Most important is the consideration of not being portrayed as such by their domestic opposition. Latin American sensitivity to having "*Yanqui*" troops on their soil is further exacerbated by the potentially unfavorable impact on the regional populations by United States troops becoming involved in situations resulting in death and destruction.

Practical problems also exist. For opium, as shown in Table 1 (page 10), the top three suppliers (accounting for 85% of all opium imports) are all remote

and rugged Asian countries in which distance and terrain make operations against or within them difficult under even the best of circumstances. To further complicate matters, Laos and Afghanistan are communist countries which cannot be expected to cooperate with deployed United States troops. Burma, the largest producer, is awash with corruption, internecine strife, and indifference to the problem.

Finally, the commitment of United States troops abroad into situations where American casualties would almost certainly result would with equal certainty result in domestic opposition and possibly large scale dissent. Deployment of significant numbers of American troops into danger over an extended period of time presupposes public support at home. This support may not be present or, if initially present, may not last.

All of the above argues against any large scale commitment of American troops against drug sources. Instead, improving source nation military and law enforcement counter-drug capabilities could accomplish the task of attacking drugs at the source without the complications inherent in introducing American combat units. Small teams designed to provide "behind the scenes" assistance with training and such operational means as command and control, intelligence, and logistics are more viable types of external American military assistance. However, once drugs are taken from their production sites and are sent to the United States, they become subject to a different kind of counter-drug activity, called interdiction.

Interdiction includes programs to reduce supplies by intercepting drugs enroute to this country from their source of production. There are essentially two types of interdiction applicable to United States military force use. The first is to intercept the drugs while they are in international waters or airspace or within an "in transit" country. This method depends a great deal

upon the cooperation of other countries. It also is restricted by the requirement to adhere to international laws and agreements with respect to stopping and searching aircraft or vessels outside the jurisdiction of any specific nation. Aircraft cannot be forced down for searches. Ships in international waters may only be boarded and searched if the country in which they are registered gives its consent. That consent may not be given in a timely manner, if at all. Practically, the amount of maritime and aviation traffic is huge and that traffic can use innumerable approach variants. For these reasons and for many of the same ones which complicate attacking drugs at their source, using the United States military to interdict illegal drugs while they are in transit through another sovereign country would normally be impractical or at least undesirable.<sup>24</sup>

The second method is to screen out the illegal drugs as they cross the United States borders. Interdiction at the border has several advantages. The right of a sovereign nation to secure its borders is universally recognized. The United States can therefore regulate the influx of persons and goods and conduct inspections and searches as it deems necessary. Additionally, the border constitutes a "choke point". Any illegal drug shipment must eventually cross the border at some place, no matter how varied or circuitous the mode of transportation or the route.

Interdiction at the border poses the fewest legal complications, minimizes international impact, and raises little risk of significant domestic opposition when compared to military operations in other countries or inside the United States. Additionally, the military by its very nature is trained and equipped to acquire, track, intercept, and as necessary capture or destroy targets whether they be in the air, on land, or sea. Those skills could just as easily be applied to border interdiction. Also, in an interview in December of 1989.

United States Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney corroborated the military role in counter-drug operations when he said that he believed that the most appropriate role for the Department of Defense in counter-drug operations was in the interdiction role.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, within the context of an overall strategy to reduce supply and demand for drugs, the military has several possible roles. The area which appears to be most suited to military capabilities while minimizing the potential for adverse international impact and domestic legal and political repercussions is drug interdiction at the nation's borders.

It is important to recognize, however, that drug interdiction at the border is defensive in nature and is targeted against drug supply and not the center of gravity of demand. An interdiction campaign by itself can therefore not be considered decisive. Its utility is to isolate the "battlefield" in the United States to facilitate the conduct of other campaigns such as education, treatment, and changing social attitudes toward drug use that are attacking the drug war center of gravity of demand.

### III. DRUG INTERDICTION

Border control and interdiction is the effort to prevent drugs from entering the country by stopping drug smugglers at the frontiers of the United States. To accomplish this task, the United States has established legal points of entry at roads and railroads crossing its land borders, airports which receive international flights, and seaports. There are two problems with this system that create vulnerabilities which smugglers can, and probably do, exploit. One is that the tremendous volume of traffic through the legal points of entry makes it difficult, if not impossible, to inspect everything or to thoroughly inspect even a small portion of the traffic. The other difficulty is



that the long and relatively open borders of the United States make it fairly easy to bypass the legal points of entry control system and illegally enter the country, thereby negating the need to conceal any contraband or take the risk of being caught in a spot inspection.<sup>46</sup> Before addressing how the Army can shore up these vulnerabilities, it is first necessary to specifically identify what drugs are being smuggled into the country and where they come from.

The three major types of illegal drugs that are brought into the United States are cocaine, marijuana, and heroin. Cocaine is a product of the coca plant, while heroin is refined from opium. The estimated production totals for the countries which produced the major portions of these drugs in 1989 are as follows:<sup>47</sup>

TABLE 1: DRUG PRODUCTION

<u>Country</u>	<u>Metric Tons</u>
OPIUM	
Burma	2,625
Afghanistan	585
Laos	375
Mexico	85
COCA	
Peru	124,408
Bolivia	65,598
Colombia	33,487
MARIJUANA	
Mexico	47,590
United States	5,000
Colombia	2,800

Simply identifying the source countries is only part of the equation, however. It is also important to know how and where the drugs are processed and how they are shipped to the United States. While Colombia only grows about 10% of the coca plants from which cocaine is derived, over 80% of the cocaine which arrives in this country is processed in and shipped from Colombia.<sup>48</sup> This information allows better focused efforts. For example, instead of focusing on

Peru where most of the coca is grown, interdiction intelligence collection assets would be better utilized in Colombia where most shipments to the United States originate.

Similarly, identification of transit routes and points of entry into the United States enables interdiction efforts to focus on areas where they could do the most good. The overwhelming majority of cocaine and marijuana shipments come to the United States via Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean. The current, most favored route is from or through Mexico across the southwest border of the United States.<sup>29</sup> Most of these shipments come in through illegal channels, although a significant amount is concealed and smuggled through legal points of entry. Heroin smuggling fits the opposite pattern. Due to its small size per unit cost, heroin can be more easily concealed and then carried or shipped or even mailed through legal points of entry. Heroin is normally smuggled in on air flights from Asia or overland from Mexico.<sup>30</sup>

Complicating interdiction efforts and diffusing the effort of those agencies designated to control the United States borders is the sheer magnitude of the task. In 1988, for the United States as a whole, over 300,000,000 people made legal border crossings in over 100,000,000 vehicles, 220,000 vessels, and 635,000 aircraft flights. Over eight million cargo containers entered the country. The southwest land border with Mexico contributed 114,000,000 of the people and 33,000,000 of the the vehicles to those totals.<sup>31</sup> In addition, over one million people are estimated to have made illegal border crossings.

The other major complication in interdiction efforts is that smugglers are thinking, reacting enemies. Their methods can change as interdiction activities focus on any given route or smuggling technique. The major route for cocaine from Colombia once was via aircraft flying directly into Florida. Stepped-up

air interdiction caused the smugglers to begin flying to the Bahamas where drug shipments were transferred into small boats. Thus a predictable pattern emerged. As air and sea interdiction of the new route became effective, the method changed. Aircraft dropped shipments into the sea at night where they were picked up by small fast boats and brought into various parts of the American coast ranging from Georgia to Texas. More recently, as interdiction successes again increased, the major smuggling route shifted to Mexico, where aircraft, vehicles, and people carry the drugs across the border.<sup>22</sup>

Sun Tzu likened armies to flowing water that naturally avoids heights and hastens to lowlands just as an army avoids strengths and moves to weaknesses. The same analogy applies to drug smugglers. Illegal drugs are brought into the United States through air, ground, and sea routes. They are concealed and brought in through legal points of entry or are more frequently smuggled in at illegal border crossings thereby avoiding customs inspections. They are carried in aircraft, boats, vehicles, in cargo containers, by people on foot, and even on horseback.<sup>24</sup> Interdiction must be effective against all these means or it will not significantly reduce the flow of drugs. Rather, it will just divert smugglers into using the means which are not being interdicted.

Army forces have already been utilized in several ways to try to remedy the major vulnerabilities to our normal interdiction efforts at the border. To increase the capability to conduct inspections at legal points of entry, National Guard units have assigned personnel to search cargo containers and man vehicle inspection checkpoints at roads crossing the Mexican-American border. To help identify illegal border crossings, Ground Surveillance Radar (GSR) manned by trainees from Fort Huachuca, Arizona has been used to monitor sections of the Mexican border.<sup>25</sup> In a similar fashion, Army crews flying Mohawk

intelligence gathering aircraft have been sent on training missions along the Mexican border and have then furnished the results of those missions to law enforcement agencies.<sup>37</sup> National Guard special forces units have conducted special reconnaissance missions within the United States targeted against remote landing strips thought to be used by drug smuggling aircraft.<sup>38</sup>

The problem with most of these efforts is that they are relatively sporadic and can be characterized as "hit or miss". The timing and duration are based more on the availability of military units and their training needs than on the nature of drug smuggling operations. Additionally, the National Guard belongs to the state governors. Active duty component military commanders do not have authority to bring National Guard units onto active duty. The uncertainty inherent in this arrangement means that military planners cannot rely on National Guard units for the success of an operation.<sup>39</sup>

Border drug interdiction operations fall into two categories. The first is that of routine patrols, inspections, and surveillance. These operations are ongoing and require relatively constant effort. Their major effect on drug smugglers is to complicate their plans and increase their logistical burden. The second type of drug interdiction operation is intelligence based. Law enforcement personnel acquire or are given advance knowledge that a particular ship or person or route is going to be used to smuggle drugs. A specific operation is then launched to interdict that particular drug shipment.<sup>40</sup>

Given then that border interdiction is the most viable mission for military forces in counter-drug operations, the Army's role as the military's ground power force should be on the land borders of the United States. As the southwest border is the main crossing point for drugs entering the United States and the flow of drugs from Canada is negligible, clearly the Army's efforts should be concentrated on the Mexican border. Given the mission of stopping the

drug flow over the southwest border, the question becomes how? Drugs cross the border in one of two ways. The first is via illegal border crossings away from established points of entry. The second is by concealing the drugs in some manner and bringing them through legal points of entry. Sealing the border between legal points of entry crossings would stop smugglers using the first method. Increasing the capability at legal points of entry to inspect and find drugs would greatly increase the interception rate at those locations.

A key point is that interdiction operations along the southwest border must be accompanied by continued or increased interdiction efforts along the other borders of the United States. Otherwise, like Sun Tzu's water, the smugglers will simply flow around the strength in the southwest and through the weaknesses in other areas. In a similar manner, sealing the border between legal points of entry will have only limited effectiveness unless counter-drug measures at the points of entry themselves are correspondingly increased.

The two tasks then are sealing the border against illegal crossings and increasing the effectiveness of identifying and confiscating illicit drugs passing through points of entry. Operations at legal crossing points are currently under the purview of the Customs Service as the lead federal agency. Assistance is provided by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and other federal agencies. Operations at legal entry points are of a specialized nature for the most part. They include document inspection and verification for persons, vehicles, and cargo. Customs fees are collected, agricultural goods are inspected for health hazards, illegal immigrants are screened out, and a myriad of other tasks performed, most of which require special skills and training that military forces (other than military police) do not have."

The one significant role in which the Army could play a part at legal points of entry would fall into the category of searching and inspecting cargoes

and shipments. This is simply physical labor, and as such, would fall under the supervision of the Customs personnel or other officials directing the search. Other than such labor augmentation, the specialized nature of the tasks at legal points of entry necessitates that such activities should be left to those agencies currently involved rather than the Army.

The question is whether or not sealing the border against illegal crossings between legal points of entry is a task for which Army training and resources should be applied. The current drug smuggling situation along the southwest border, Army warfighting doctrine, and history provide the analytical framework. First and foremost, the United States Army is organized, trained, and equipped to fight wars in accordance with AirLand Battle doctrine. Successful application of this doctrine requires that the Army must operate in accordance with four AirLand Battle basic tenets: initiative, agility, depth, and synchronization.<sup>42</sup> The answers to two questions can be used to indicate the extent to which the United States Army operating with its current doctrine can effectively conduct the drug interdiction mission at the border. First, what does history suggest regarding the utility of the tenets for a military force given the mission to seal off a national border against a non-military threat? Second, what is the utility of the tenets for Army involvement in drug interdiction operations along the southwest border of the United States today? The first question will be answered by examining two historical case studies. The first of these is the "Iron Curtain" interposed by the communists in East Germany between their country and West Germany.

#### IV. SEALING THE EAST GERMAN FRONTIER

The East German Army provides an example of success by a military force in sealing off a border against a non-military threat. The "threat" in this case

was the political and economic impact on the country of East Germany by literally hundreds of thousands of its citizens fleeing the "communist workers' paradise" to live in West Germany. In 1989, dramatic political changes occurred that negated the very reason for the border sealing operation. However, the example still applies as reasons other than its efficiency reduced its utility.

The success of the East German measures is indicated by the fact that, prior to sealing the border in 1961, people were fleeing at the rate of nearly one thousand per day. While reliable statistics are not available, the rate then fell to only a handful each year. For example, in 1973 only 380 civilians and 28 military personnel are known to have escaped across the border and by 1979, the number had fallen to 74 civilian and 12 military.<sup>4</sup> When juxtaposed against the spectacle of hundreds of thousands of East Germans "voting with their feet" and crossing into West Germany in 1989 when the border was opened, it is clear that the small number of people who crossed the border while it was closed from 1961-1989 was not a function of general contentment in East Germany, but was based on the difficulty of crossing the border.

Despite repugnance at the purpose of the operation, the fact remains that the efforts of the East Germans to seal their border were very successful. The reasons for that success will be examined in terms of the AirLand Battle tenets of initiative, agility, depth, and synchronization.

The border between East and West Germany extends for 867 miles, including the ring around West Berlin. It is guarded by a part of the East German military called the Frontier Troops. The Frontier Troops are organized and equipped similar to regular East German Army units. Their ranks, uniforms, and weapons are the same except that Frontier Troop units do not possess or need heavy weapons such as tanks or artillery. Training is similar with the

exception of much more intense political indoctrination and some specialized training for frontier duties.<sup>44</sup>

There are approximately 50,000 Frontier Troops with 32,000 deployed along the Inter-German Border and 12,000 around Berlin. The total also includes 6,000 People's Navy Frontier Troops. The remainder serve in staff or schools or along the Polish and Czechoslovakian borders.<sup>45</sup>

The Frontier Troops guard the border and must also be available for employment as combat capable units under the Warsaw Pact's Joint Command. Legal crossing points are not under their control, but are manned by regular police and customs officials. Specific tasks for the Frontier Troops are:<sup>46</sup>

- Prevent escapes from East Germany.
- Prevent illegal border crossings into East Germany.
- Guard frontier-sealing and security installations.
- Provide military defense of the border in case of war.
- Reconnoiter the border areas.
- Ensure public safety and order in the border areas.

Obviously, the first task provides the major focus. The analysis of Frontier Troop operations in terms of the AirLand Battle tenets will be based on their successful operations in accomplishing that task.

Initiative means setting or changing the terms of battle by action. It implies offensive action. Border sealing operations by their very nature are defensive and reactive. However, even in defensive type operations, the initiative can be taken by "turning the tables on the attacker", who has the advantage of choosing the time and place of action. United States Army Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations, says this can be done by obtaining advance warning of enemy intentions, planning to take into account likely enemy courses of action, and developing the capability to act rapidly so as to negate the



attacker's initial advantage.<sup>47</sup>

The Frontier Troops maintain an extensive intelligence network to obtain advance warning of escape attempts. Some of this intelligence comes from the People's Police (National Police), but much comes from two organizations that fall under the control of the Frontier Troops. The first is the Frontier Auxiliary. It is a part-time militia type organization which ex-Frontier Troop personnel are encouraged to join. Along the border, each Frontier Battalion controls the Auxiliaries who live in its area of responsibility. The Auxiliaries monitor the border area, check traffic on roads leading to "no-entry" parts of the border, identify suspicious persons, and have the power to detain border violators.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, Frontier Troops control Frontier Security Activists. The Activists are local residents whose job is simply to look for and report suspicious activities in the border areas.<sup>49</sup> No information is available on the effectiveness of these two organizations, but the fact that they have been maintained and actively recruited for indicates that they must have some positive utility in their primary purpose of providing intelligence and advance warning to the Frontier Troops.

The next tenet is agility. Agility is the ability to act faster than the enemy. It is both mental and physical. Agility mainly involves rapidly concentrating friendly strength and shifting that concentration with minimum delay.<sup>50</sup> It may be termed an absolute when only one side is looked at, but in application it is a relative capability. Therefore, measures which detract from the opponent's agility have the effect enhancing your own.

The main factor which provides a relative agility advantage for the Frontier Troops over escapees is the extensive barrier system along the border. It is designed to essentially take away agility from the escapees by confronting them with barriers to physically slow or stop them and to mentally confound

them. The barriers stretch from the Baltic Sea along the entire Inter-German border and around West Berlin for a total of 867 miles. Included as passive barriers are metal fences, concrete walls, barbed wire, and anti-vehicle ditches. Along approximately 410 miles of the border there are other more deadly measures which include minefields and automatic firing devices which are activated by tripwire and, similar to claymore mines, spray a cone of shrapnel through the air in a set direction.<sup>51</sup>

There are 665 manned observation towers along the border along with foot patrols, concealed sentries at varying locations, and vehicle patrols along a convoy path which parallels the border. Also included at various places are randomly timed intermittent searchlights, searchlights connected to acoustic alarms, about 1000 guard dogs on runs totaling about 60 miles, and a system of acoustic, tripwire, and electrical alarm sensors which alert the nearest Frontier Troop post. The sensors are mainly placed along the edge of the security strip, so the guards can take countermeasures while the escapees are still at least 500 meters from the main barriers and the frontier. Additionally, to enhance observation and fields of fire along the frontier, trees have been felled, hills leveled, and buildings razed or moved.<sup>52</sup>

While the frontier barrier system is the main factor affecting agility, it is also the primary determinant of depth in border operations. United States Army FM 100-5, Operations says that depth is "the extension of operations in space, time, and resources".<sup>53</sup> It provides room for maneuver and requires information from outside the area of immediate concern.<sup>54</sup> The border barrier system is essentially a linear position of very shallow depth. The Frontier Troop area of operations only extends out to a five kilometer Control Zone. Limited information from outside that zone is provided by the People's Police, but the police will normally take action against any escape plot they discover.

so the Frontier Troops will usually only become aware of fugitives when they enter their area of operations and are discovered. Time and space for maneuver, except at the very small unit level, are therefore not considerations.

The final AirLand Battle tenet is synchronization. Synchronization is "the arrangement of activities in time, space, and purpose to produce maximum combat power at the decisive point."<sup>55</sup> If the decisive point is the border and combat power is the capability to stop fugitives, then the Frontier Troops have clearly achieved a great deal of synchronization. The key to synchronization is unambiguous unity of purpose throughout the organization. While lip service is given to defense of the border from outside enemies, it is clear that the focus of the organization is to prevent escapes from East Germany. Even the award system is geared toward that purpose, with medals, leaves, and cash bonuses provided to those who stop fugitives. The first step in that process, however, was the creation of Frontier Troops. Border patrol for them was not a temporary duty nor something done in addition to, or as a distraction to, other duties.

Unity of effort among the Frontier Troops is also enhanced by a clear and unambiguous chain of command from the Minister of Defense to the Chief of Frontier Troops to each of the three major commands: Frontier Commands North, Center, and South. Frontier Commands North and South are located along the Inter-German border. Center is responsible for Berlin. Each command has six Frontier Regiments and each Regiment has three battalions of four companies.<sup>56</sup>

Further facilitating synchronization, each battalion has a permanently assigned sector of normally 20-30 kilometers, depending on the terrain. Working in eight hour shifts, each company mans the entire battalion sector in turn. Within each battalion's sector, the Frontier Auxiliaries and Frontier Activists report directly to the company on duty. The permanence of the arrangement ensures ease of coordination and understanding of the local commander's intent.

Additionally, the battalion has the opportunity to develop and rehearse standard responses for anticipated contingencies to ensure well synchronized actions take place especially when time is critical. In the same manner, the permanent assignment of regiments to the Frontier Commands and the singular purpose of the Chief of Frontier Troops promotes ease of coordination and the understanding that comes with longstanding familiarity.<sup>59</sup>

With the exception of synchronization, the tenets of AirLand Battle had little to do with the success of the East German frontier sealing operations. Elements of agility, initiative, and depth were present, but not to the extent described in United States Army doctrine. Instead, the overall concept of operations for the East Germans was more in tune with the Maginot Line than with the fluid, fast moving, non-linear operations described in the AirLand Battle doctrine under which the American Army has been designed and trained.<sup>60</sup>

The success of the Frontier Troops in sealing the border was essentially derived from exploiting the traditional advantages of the defense within the constraints of a shallow, linear position. The ground was prepared with barriers and obstacles. Alarms and sensors were emplaced. Fields of observation were cleared. The positions presented a continuous front. Mass, in terms of concentrating superior combat power at the point of decision, was achieved. The point of decision was the border and the mass of Frontier Troops were arrayed there. Since combat power is relative, even small groups of frontier guards had superior combat power when compared to their escapee "enemies". Therefore, there was no need to position Frontier Troops in depth or hold any in reserve. The "enemy" threat did not justify it.

The modern, relatively high technology success of the East Germans can be contrasted with a low technology operation in the early part of the 20th century when the United States Army was given a border sealing mission along the United

States-Mexican border. While many of the circumstances were dissimilar to the East German example, it still provides a study of how a military force successfully executed a non-traditional mission against a non-military enemy.

#### V. STOPPING PANCHO VILLA

The border between the United States and Mexico has long been a source of contention. Disagreements about the actual trace of the border, allegations of border violations by both sides, and finally, actual skirmishes between the armed forces of the two countries brought on the Mexican-American War of 1846. After the war, further disputes over the trace of the border brought on skirmishes between the troops of the two countries in 1859, 1877 and again in 1878. Additionally, the border was the scene of numerous raids and counter-raids by lawless elements in which the inability or unwillingness of the Mexican authorities to prevent incursions and their failure to capture and punish raiders often caused United States troops or other authorities to take such action on their own.<sup>61</sup> From 1884 to 1910 under the rule of dictator Porfirio Diaz, the two countries enjoyed friendly relations, to the extent that a standing agreement was reached allowing the forces of both countries to cross the border without requesting permission if they were in "hot pursuit" of bandits or Indians.<sup>62</sup>

The Mexican Revolution took place from 1919-1920. During this period of chaos, amid an environment where the Mexican authorities could not or would not control the banditry, the pattern of lawless incursions recurred. Various factions vied for power in often violent struggles. Soldiers often doubled as bandits. The border area with the United States became a favored location for these activities. Munitions were easily acquired from United States manufacturers; the United States became a refuge when pursuit from other Mexican forces became too hot; and American ranches, farms, and banks became convenient

sources of provisions and money. Additionally, popular antipathy against America amongst Mexicans was deep-rooted. Mexican leaders found that tapping into that sentiment through anti-American posturing and forays across the border enhanced their popularity.<sup>63</sup>

As news of the increased chaos brought about by the revolution reached Washington, the commanding general of the Texas Department was ordered to assist civil authorities in maintaining order along the border, specifically to prevent cross-border incursions from Mexico. To that end, he sent troops of cavalry to Eagle Pass and Del Rio, Texas in November of 1910.<sup>64</sup> As the internal situation in Mexico became more acute and as border violations and subsequent crimes against Americans increased, so did the commitment of American troops. By the autumn of 1915, border incidents reached a crescendo with large numbers of American homesteads and ranches raided, cattle stolen, and citizens kidnapped. At the end of the year, over half of the Regular Army of the United States was committed to the southwest border and American troops patrolled the entire border from San Diego to the mouth of the Rio Grande.<sup>65</sup>

Initially, the border was divided into patrol districts. In Texas, the districts were located at Brownsville, Fort McIntosh, Eagle Pass, Big Bend, Fabens, Laredo, and El Paso. Other districts were located at Columbus, New Mexico and in Arizona at Douglas, Nogales, Naco, and Yuma. Limited numbers of infantry and other services manned the camps, but the lion's share of the force was cavalry which conducted almost all of the patrolling.<sup>66</sup>

A partial listing of frontier violations during the period from late 1915 on into 1916 includes incidents at Hachita, New Mexico; Fort Hancock, New Mexico; Edinburg, Texas; Osborn, Arizona; Alpine, Texas; Glen Springs, Texas; Deemer's Store, Texas; New Hatchet, New Mexico; Webb, Texas; San Ygnacio, Texas; San Pedro, Texas; and Old Fort Early, Texas. During the first six

weeks of 1916, 63 Americans were killed on United States soil by raiders from across the Mexican border. Most were casualties of small skirmishes. For example, at Glen Springs, one child, three United States soldiers, and two Mexicans were killed and two American soldiers were wounded. At Deemer's Store, eight Americans were kidnapped. At San Pedro, two Mexicans and ten rifles were captured by American cavalrymen. Four United States soldiers were killed at San Ygnacio while six Mexicans were slain and four taken prisoner. The composition of these raiding parties ranged from outright bandits to members of Mexican revolutionary forces to actual soldiers in the ruling Carranza government's armed forces.<sup>67</sup>

However, on 8 March of 1916, a Mexican rebel leader known as Pancho Villa crossed the border into the United States with a force variously estimated at between 300-1500 men and conducted a night-time raid against Columbus, New Mexico. The town was ransacked and partially burned. American killed and wounded included twenty-two civilians and seventeen soldiers. Close to one hundred casualties were inflicted on the raiders during the fighting that night and during the pursuit by the American cavalry the next day.<sup>68</sup>

Public outrage in America was intense and vocal. Newspapers and politicians called for action, and action was swiftly forthcoming. Brigadier General John J. Pershing was ordered to organize a "provisional division" to seek out and destroy Villa's band. On 15 March, Pershing's Punitive Expedition, as it was called, consisting of two brigades of cavalry and one of infantry crossed the border heading south.<sup>69</sup> Pershing's Expedition was the best known component of American military involvement along the border. It was the only case where the Americans actually took the offensive and gained the initiative.

The unexpectedness of the action and the agility with which Pershing moved was enhanced by the utilization of new technology. Trucks were used for troop

transport and logistics. Airplanes were used for liaison and reconnaissance. Radios were used to pass instructions.<sup>70</sup> The Punitive Expedition pursued and harried Villa's band until it was widely dispersed and demoralized. It was years before Villa could again put together a similar type force.<sup>71</sup>

Of significance, though, is the reaction of the Mexican government and that of its army. Although Villa was a revolutionary and the American action was of direct benefit to the Mexican government, its position was that the Punitive Expedition had to quickly withdraw. Interestingly, most of the casualties suffered by Pershing's force were actually inflicted by legitimate military forces of the Mexican government. Boyd Hall at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas is named after Captain Charles Boyd who was killed by Mexican soldiers along with others of his cavalry troop near Carrizal in Mexico.<sup>72</sup>

Repercussions of a more serious nature also resulted. Germany's World War I decision to conduct unrestricted submarine warfare was partly based on the perception that the United States was tied down with the Mexican border problem and would therefore be reluctant to enter the war against Germany. Furthermore, Germany attempted to capitalize on the Mexican hostility toward the United States by entering into a secret military alliance with Mexico in the famous "Zimmerman Incident"; named after the German minister of state who attempted to negotiate the agreement. Thus unrestricted submarine warfare and the Zimmerman Incident were the two key elements in bringing the United States out of neutrality and into World War I on the side of the allies in 1917.<sup>73</sup>

However, the major military effort in 1916 was still along the border itself. To further secure the frontier, President Woodrow Wilson mobilized 150,000 National Guardsmen from every state in the union except Washington and Oregon.<sup>74</sup> The border was then reorganized from the cavalry patrol districts and camps into ten military districts composed of troops of all arms, based on the



terrain and local situation. The districts in Texas were Brownsville, Laredo, Eagle Pass, Del Rio, Big Bend, and El Paso. New Mexico, Arizona, Nogales, and Yuma comprised the remaining military districts.<sup>75</sup>

The new concept of operations depended less on mobile cavalry patrols and more on small outposts of infantry scattered along the border. The outposts watched over fords on the Rio Grande and mountainous trails crossing the border as well as the bridges and main roads. The infantry were backed by artillery in many cases and by cavalry in all cases. The cavalry emphasis changed from patrolling to quick reaction to alarms from the infantry outposts or from the local populace. In modern terms, the troop deployments were in the pattern of an area defense, in which the bulk of the forces were deployed in static positions to retain ground. The positions were well forward, linear, and shallow as they ran immediately next to and parallel to the border. The Americans dug in and cleared areas of observation and fields of fire. Obstacles consisting of ditches, stone walls, and barbed wire fences were constructed.<sup>76</sup> Any persons crossing the border other than at legal entry points were turned back or held until turned over to Customs officials or local law enforcement personnel; although at one point there were over 4000 persons awaiting disposition in one military camp alone.<sup>77</sup>

With the exception of the Punitive Expedition, cross border activity by American troops was not authorized. Additionally, until the Columbus incident, the rules of engagement for American troops precluded firing across the border, even when taken under fire.<sup>78</sup> Taking cover or withdrawing out of range were the only options. The Americans were therefore placed into a reactive mode of operation.

Reconnaissance and surveillance across the border were restricted to persuading American or Mexican civilians to make observations and report back or

else relying on the Mexican government forces. Reports from the Mexican Army were questionable at best, however. For instance, the detachment across the border from Columbus, New Mexico had informed the Americans that nothing out of the ordinary was occurring the night of the raid, even though hundreds of *Villistas* were passing nearby. Further adding to United States Army skepticism of Mexican assistance was that some elements of the government forces had been identified as members of raiding parties.<sup>79</sup>

The United States Army at this time was still used to operating in the dispersed, small unit fashion it had learned fighting Indians on the frontier. As a result, there were no permanent units larger than regiments. Instead, headquarters above regimental level were provided by military districts which were based on geography and were responsible for all military operations within their territory. The districts and their staffs attained some permanence and thereby a degree of familiarity with the locality and its inhabitants on both sides of the border. The overall commander of the border operations was the Commanding General of the Southern Military Department of the United States. The other military department commanders (Eastern, Central, and Western) had the supporting role of transferring Regular Army troops from their area of responsibility to the Southern Department and supervising the mobilization and movement of National Guard units from states in their department.<sup>80</sup>

By the end of 1916, these measures had been implemented to the extent that cross border depredations had fallen off to almost zero. To achieve this effect, the United States had sent 48,033 Regular Army soldiers and 158,559 members of the National Guard to serve on the border. Most of the National Guard units were sent home before 1917, but not before they had gained valuable training and field experience which proved to be of benefit when the United States entered World War II only a few months later.<sup>81</sup>

The final postscript to the border actions came in 1919 after a period of relative quiet. Pancho Villa's star was again ascending and he attacked Mexican government forces at Juarez, across the border from El Paso, Texas with a force of over 1,000 men. During the fighting, one American soldier was killed and three soldiers and several civilians, including two women, were wounded by fire from across the border. The local commander, Brigadier General James Erwin, then told the Mexican army commander to "get out of the way if you don't want to be hurt". Artillery concentrations were fired on *Villista* locations and a regiment of American infantry assaulted across the Rio Grande and drove Villa's army out of Juarez. Concurrently, below the city, engineers constructed a pontoon bridge and two regiments of cavalry crossed the Rio Grande. At daybreak, the cavalry attacked and routed the remainder of the *Villistas* outside the city. Pancho Villa never again posed a threat to either the United States or Mexican governments. One more time, however, the Mexican government protested strongly and the Juarez commander was decorated, not for fighting against Villa, but for action against the American force which had saved him.

Just as with the East German border situation, the operations of the American Army along the southwest border are not a good primer for AirLand Battle. Agility, initiative, depth, and synchronization could have served as the basis for the Punitive Expedition and for the action which finally defeated Villa in 1919, but those operations were exceptions. The course of action which finally shut down the illegal border activity in 1916 consisted of massing a large number of troops along the border in a linear, shallow, static, prepared defense. Two hundred thousand troops on a 1800 mile border works out to 111 soldiers for every mile of frontier. While some of these troops would have been working in support or technical jobs and would not have been up on the border, obviously there was a sufficient density of troops to deter or repulse the type

of small raiding party which constituted the threat.

The creation of the "all arms" military districts controlling all the forces within their area of responsibility certainly enhanced capability for synchronization and thereby contributed to unity of effort. However, the force was not agile nor was it meant to be agile in any other than the small unit tactical sense. Essentially, the Army was to serve as a stationary barrier put in place along the border. The forward depth of the operation was limited by the requirement to respect the sovereignty of Mexico. The requirement to protect all American lives and property, no matter how close to the border, drove the defense into the form of a forward, linear operation; thereby limiting rearward depth as well. The defensive nature of the operation, the requirement to respect the international border, and the lack of intelligence concerning the enemy all acted to frustrate U.S. forces in attempting to seize the initiative.

American success in stopping the cross border depredations came about for many of the same reasons that the East Germans had success. A large number of troops were concentrated on the border which was, once again, the point of decision. A defensive line of outposts was prepared that ran all the way from one end of the border to the other. Extensive time was available to prepare and improve the positions as well as to become familiar with the terrain. Traditional advantages of the defense benefitted American operations more than capabilities which could be readily categorized as belonging to initiative, agility, or depth.

The new Pancho Villa on the southwest border is illegal drugs. Given the current drug smuggling situation and the lessons learned from sealing the Inter-German border and stopping the old Pancho Villa and his associates, the appropriate role for the United States Army on the southwest border today will be examined.

## VI. STOPPING THE NEW PANCHO VILLA

Operational art is "the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals in a theater of war or theater of operations through the design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations."<sup>33</sup> The frontier operations of East Germany and the United States were both designed to use military forces to achieve the given strategic goal of sealing the border. Further, the operational level commander must answer three questions which address the essentials of operational art:<sup>34</sup>

- (1) What military condition must be produced in the theater of operations to achieve the strategic goal?
- (2) What sequence of actions is most likely to produce that condition?
- (3) How should the resources of the force be applied to accomplish that sequence of actions?

The answer to the first question for both East Germany and the United States was to achieve positive military control over the length of the border in order to prevent illegal crossings. The sequence of actions for both countries was fairly similar. Both started with patrols and then added outposts with supporting troops. While this proved sufficient for America to sufficiently stem the illegal crossings, the East Germans found it necessary to also construct an elaborate barrier system, which served as a force multiplier enabling them to draw down on the number of troops committed to the frontier. The resources of the two countries were also applied in similar manners. Both the Americans and East Germans began with small forces and over the years gradually added more. In both cases, a pivotal event--the Berlin crisis of 1961 for the East Germans and Pancho Villa's 1916 raid on Columbus for the Americans precipitated a sudden large increase in the allocation of resources. While border sealing operations are not a traditional use for military forces, the operations themselves are still examples of the performance of the operational function in terms of translating a strategic goal into tactical utilization of

military resources.

The most appropriate role for the military in counter-drug operations is interdiction at the border. For the Army, that translates into interdiction at the land borders of the United States. Based on where drugs come from and how they get to the United States, this further translates into the United States Army conducting counter-drug interdiction along the southwest border with Mexico. The obvious strategic goal for counter-drug interdiction is to stop the flow of illegal drugs across the border. The military conditions for achieving this goal are the same as for the Inter-German border and the southwest border in the early part of this century: to achieve positive military control over the border to prevent illegal crossings.

Many other similarities exist besides the mission to seal the border. They include the non-military nature of the enemy, the politically sensitive nature of military operations on a border, the operation is not targeted against the enemy's center of gravity, and the nature of the battlefield as linear and relatively non-lethal.

The center of gravity for illegal drug use is the demand in the United States. Border interdiction only influences that demand by reducing the influx of drugs and thereby affecting the supply and demand dynamic. In a similar fashion, the center of gravity for the enemy in the East German example were the political and economic conditions that caused people to want to leave. The Frontier Troops could not attack that issue. They could only try to "raise the price" for those who wanted to escape. The American troops along the southwest border during the Mexican Revolution could not attack the greed and lust for power and glory which led to the border crossings by Mexican elements. They could only try to prevent such crossings.

As a result, the military actions in these three cases are inherently non-

decisive. Southwest border depredations did not completely cease until the end of the Mexican Revolution. The resultant peace and stability in Mexico brought about prosperity along with law and order south of the U.S. border. In East Germany, while the military operation to seal the border was a success, the continued desire of the citizens for a better life led to a de facto defeat and a political decision to open the border. Similarly, the Army today could successfully seal the southwest border against illegal crossings, but the drug war will not be won unless some other operation is attacking the center of gravity of demand.

The nature of the battlefield as linear and relatively non-lethal gave rise to a method of defense which Clausewitz characterized as the cordon. By a cordon, Clausewitz meant any system of defense in which a series of outposts is intended to give direct protection to an area. Because such a line is normally very long, it can offer only minimal resistance. However, the purpose of a cordon type defense is not to defend against a major attack, but to withstand an attack which is slight due to the attacker's small magnitude of strength. The nature of such attack is normally a raid. Clausewitz's examples, such as the Great Wall of China, were specifically designed to seal frontiers against incursions by lawless elements from neighboring lands.<sup>25</sup>

In terms of both purpose and form, the operations of the American Army on the southwest border and the East German operations were of the nature of a cordon. In relation to the AirLand Battle doctrine tenets of initiative, agility, depth, and synchronization, a cordon could almost be considered as the antithesis. However, both the East Germans and the Americans achieved success. Further, Clausewitz maintained that this form of defense was functional against small raiding forces. The disconnect between the AirLand Battle tenets and the cordon type of defense is that they are like apples and oranges. AirLand Battle

doctrine is predicated upon a view of warfare as an offensively oriented, wide ranging, high tempo conflict conducted on a non-linear battlefield of great depth with highly lethal weapons employed by the intermixed forces of both sides.

The cordon is designed for situations where the battlefield is linear and shallow and static, where a continuous front must be maintained, where enemy combat power is limited, and where the only action envisioned for the forces employed in the cordon is defensive in nature. The AirLand Battle environment is not the same as that encountered by the American Army along the southwest border early in this century nor by the East German Frontier Troops on the Inter-German border. Nor is it the same as that of the current drug smuggling situation.

The current situation, just as in the two historical examples, calls for a cordon defense type of solution. The long and linear nature of the area to be defended and the requirement to conduct that defense immediately at the border against a relatively small and weak enemy whose intent is to avoid contact with any defense all argue for the cordon defense. To answer the second question of the operational art, then, the action necessary to achieve the condition of positive control of the border to prevent illegal crossings is to establish a cordon type of defense adjacent to the border.

The form of the defense, as implicit in the term cordon and as observed in the historical examples would be a series of outposts with interlocking fields of observation which extend along the entire border. In 1918, 200,000 soldiers secured the southwest border at an approximate density of 111 soldiers per mile. East Germany in modern times used only 32,000 soldiers to secure the Inter-German border at a density of 36 soldiers per mile. While some differences are obviously attributable to terrain, a much more extensive barrier system and



modern technology are the main driving factors in how the Frontier Troops could use their soldiers more efficiently. Walls and fences and other obstacles were emplaced to help achieve economy of force with people. Further, modern sensors, to include seismic and acoustic alarms, extended the capabilities of the Frontier Troops to enable them to monitor just as much border with fewer troops.

An additional factor which must be considered is that East German Frontier Troops were authorized to employ, and often did, deadly force to stop illegal border crossings.<sup>87</sup> The moral effect of this policy certainly served as a deterrent to potential escapees. The practical effect would be to lessen the number of escape attempts and thereby enable the East Germans to man the frontier with less troops. The ramification for the American southwest border is that a higher density of troops than the East Germans used might be necessary to apprehend, versus kill, illegal border crossers.

Since smugglers use both air and ground means of transportation, the cordon would have to be effective against both means. Sealing off the frontier on the ground could be accomplished through a series of outposts supplemented by barriers and alarms. Barriers could include everything from ditches to walls to fences to concertina type barbed wire. Observation of the border and the barrier system could be maintained by soldiers via long range day and night vision devices. Remotely controlled or triggered television cameras and searchlights could also be used. Sensor systems to provide alarms could include seismic alarms such as found in the Army's Platoon Early Warning System, acoustic alarms, ground surveillance radar, or simple tripwires attached to some type of alarm device. Patrols conducted on foot, by vehicle, in helicopters, or with remotely piloted vehicles can provide coverage of less likely approaches.

Stopping illegal air traffic can be accomplished in several ways. The first is to be able to identify, track, and intercept illegal air traffic.

Establishing air corridors for cross border traffic can help sort out legal from illegal crossings. A radar "picket line", such as the series of six aerostats currently being emplaced along the southwest border is needed to identify violators. However, the rugged terrain and the north-south compartmentalization of the mountain ranges in the area provides avenues where some aircraft will undoubtedly get through. Ground observers and smaller radars, such as those the Army air defense uses, could cover those areas. Further measures would be to cover small airfields near the border with human or remotely monitored sensor observation.

Reaction to aircraft sightings requires that a command and control system capable of vectoring friendly intercept aircraft must be established. Friendly aircraft must include fixed wing airplanes capable of flying longer distances at higher speeds and helicopters capable of quickly taking off and carrying troops to airstrips where smuggler aircraft land.

The final operational question is what resources to apply to accomplish the necessary actions. Both the East Germans and Americans in the historical examples initially failed to concentrate enough forces to achieve the desired effect. They both gradually built up forces until sufficient troops were on hand. Then the Germans actually began to reduce troops as they increased the amount and sophistication of their barrier and alarm system. To achieve immediate effectiveness, sufficient force must be deployed initially. Using modern technology, East Germany sealed its border with a force averaging a density of 36 soldiers per mile. The same average density would require a force of approximately 65,000 soldiers to control and close off the southwestern border to illegal crossings. (An assumption is made here that modern U.S. sensor technology is more effective than East German technology. A further assumption is made that the edge in technology is sufficient to counterbalance

the gains in East German efficiency made as a result of their liberal use of deadly force.) In terms of soldiers alone, that is roughly the size of a United States Army corps, which would therefore be the appropriate size ground force headquarters. Interestingly, this size force also approximates the size of the force contemplated for withdrawal from Europe in the near future under the auspices of the Conventional Forces-Europe (CFE) troop reduction negotiations.<sup>22</sup>

Air resources for this mission must come from North American Air Defense Command (NORAD). Specifics in this regard are beyond the scope of this study. The joint nature of the operation requires that a Joint Task Force also be allocated for command and control purposes.<sup>23</sup>

Geographical resources allocated to this operation should be the land and air areas immediately contiguous to the land border and reaching as far back into the United States as smugglers usually go when they make illegal border crossings to fly in drugs. Normal tactics are to dash over the border for no more than fifty miles, drop off the shipment and then dash back again, but enough space must be allocated for flexibility as smugglers adapt.<sup>24</sup> Positioning the theater of war for all counter-drug activities to include source countries, transit areas, and the United States itself, then this geographical area would constitute a subordinate theater of operations to that theater of war.

There are two major restraints which must be considered. The first is the sovereignty of Mexico. Mexico's hostile reaction when American forces crossed the border chasing after Pancho Villa provides a clue as to what to expect. Violation of Mexican sovereignty again would most probably serve to cut off any cooperation which Mexico might be offering and also produce repercussions in other Latin American countries due to sensitivities about "Gringo adventurism".

The second restraint is the Posse Comitatus law forbidding the participation of the U.S. military in searches, seizures, and apprehensions in

support of civil authorities. Army lawyer Gary Manuele in a research paper on Posse Comitatus argues that directives given to the military by the president performing his constitutional duties as commander in chief are not covered by Posse Comitatus. Therefore, if ordered by the president, using the military to apprehend illegal border crossers is appropriate.<sup>21</sup> Or, Congress can simply pass legislation giving the military the authority to conduct apprehensions, searches, and seizures for the specific mission of sealing off the border. In any regard, for the military to be truly effective in this mission, it must have the power to apprehend border violators. Posse Comitatus must be changed. Of interest is that the Posse Comitatus Act became law in the 19th century, but a mention of it was never encountered in all the material on American military activities on the southwest border from 1910-1920, even though the military was actively engaged in apprehending border violators.

## VII. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The most appropriate role for the United States military in support of the nation's crusade against drugs is to conduct interdiction operations at the nation's borders to stop the flow of illegal drugs. Given that strategic task, the military condition to achieve it is to gain positive control over the entire length of the border to prevent illegal crossings. The actions to achieve that condition are to establish a cordon type of defense along the border with ground troops complemented and reinforced by barriers, sensors, and air assets. The necessary resources are approximately a corps of Army troops along with supporting Air Force assets with both under the control of a Joint Task Force headquarters.

Ground force operations will mainly consist of static surveillance and observation along with continual maintenance and improvement of positions and

obstacles. Units that are trained, organized and equipped to execute AirLand Battle doctrine will require specialized training for this mission along with reorganization. Agility, initiative, and depth will give way to preparation and concentration as the operating tenets.

Using doctrine that is developed for one set of conditions and attempting to apply it in a fundamentally different situation will lead to inefficient and possibly ineffective operations. The AirLand Battle tenets are designed to guide operations on a non-linear, fast moving, highly lethal battlefield. Operations to seal the border are essentially linear, static, and non-lethal as compared to traditional battlefields. A cordon defense has been shown to be effective in border sealing operations with similar types of threats and political restraints. Ignoring proven effectiveness for the convenience and internal acceptability of using current doctrine may result in mission failure.

Reducing the supply of drugs is an important component of our nation's overall strategy to defeat drugs. Of the possibilities for reducing supply by attacking drugs at their source, in transit, or within the United States; border interdiction against drugs in transit is the method which can provide the most effectiveness with the least chance of adverse domestic and international repercussions.

The answer to the question of "What should the role of the United States Army be in a counter-drug campaign?" is that the Army can and should be committed to play the lead role for our country in sealing our nation's land borders against the smuggling of illicit drugs. The actions of the American Army along the southwest border in the early part of the twentieth century provide historical precedence for the Army in this type of role. There is a window of opportunity now open for force availability. The conventional threat against which the Army is designed to fight is the Soviet Union. That threat

appears to have diminished, but the Army has not yet drawn down correspondingly. Before that occurs, there are sufficient forces available for the counter-drug mission on America's southwest border. If those forces are committed and effectively used then we can expect similar results as experienced before on the southwest border and along the Inter-German border. Failure to use the Army for that mission or if the Army is assigned to that mission and does not attain success may result in failure in the nation's overall fight against drug use. At a minimum it will mean a much longer campaign. A longer campaign, in turn, means the scourge of drug use will continue with its high costs to the nation in crime, health, and the undermining of American values.

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